

A N
O R A T I O N:
DELIVERED AT THE
REVEREND T. HARRINGTON'S CHURCH, LANCASTER,
JUNE TWENTY-FIFTH, ANNO LUCIS 5781,
UPON THE
FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST;
IN PRESENCE OF
THE BRETHREN OF TRINITY LODGE, N^o. 6,
OF THE
MOST ANCIENT AND HONORABLE SOCIETY
O F
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,
UNDER THE
JURISDICTION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE
IN BOSTON, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BY OUR REV. BROTHER A. DUNBAR.

WORCESTER, (MASSACHUSETTS)
PRINTED BY BROTHER ISAIAH THOMAS, MDCCLXXXII.
(A. L. 5781.)

ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE

REVEREND T. HARRINGTON'S CHURCH, LANCASTER

ON JUNE TWENTY-NINTH A.D. 1842

UPON THE

FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

IN PRESENCE OF

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF LANCASHIRE

OF THE

MOST ANCIENT AND HONORABLE SOCIETY



FREE AND ASSOCIATED LABOURERS

UNDER THE

JURISDICTION OF THE MASTER WORKMEN OF THE GRAND LODGE

OF LANCASHIRE, CONSTITUTED IN 1751

BY ONE OF THE LANCASHIRE ASSOCIATES

W. ROBERTS (1842)

Printed by B. THOMAS, LANCASHIRE

(M. 1. 174)

LANCASTER, JUNE 25th, A. L. 5781.

In TRINITY LODGE:

The RIGHT WORSHIPFUL EDMUND HEARD in the CHAIR.

VOTED, That our Brothers—the **RIGHT WORSHIPFUL TIMOTHY WHITING, P. M. of WASHINGTON LODGE, (No. X.)** The **REVEREND and WORSHIPFUL SAMUEL DANA, S. W.** and the **WORSHIPFUL ISAIAH THOMAS, J. W. of TRINITY LODGE**—be a COMMITTEE to wait on our **REVEREND and worthy Brother ASA DUNBAR**, to express the Thanks of this Lodge for his learned and elegant Oration this Day delivered, and to request a Copy of the same for the Press.

LANCASTER, June 25th, A. L. 5781.

WORSHIPFUL BRETHREN of this RIGHT WORSHIPFUL LODGE,

***Y**OUR Request is my Justification before you, and my only Excuse to the World, for submitting this Day's Performance to public Censure.*

A. DUNBAR.

**To the Right Worshipful EDMUND HEARD, Master,
and the other Officers and Members of
TRINITY LODGE.**

LANCASTER, June 24th, A. I. 1782.

in TRINITY LODGE:

The Right Worshipful EDMUND HEARD in the Chair.

VOTED, That our Brothers—the Right Worshipful
TIMOTHY WHITING, P. M. of Washington Lodge,
(No. X.) The Reverend and Worshipful SAMUEL BANA,
S. W. and the Worshipful ISAIAH THOMAS, J. W. of
Trinity Lodge—be a Committee to wait on our Reverend
and worthy Brother ASA DUNBAR, to express the Thanks of
this Lodge for his learned and elegant Oration this Day deliver-
ed, and to request a Copy of the same for the Files.

LANCASTER, June 24th, A. I. 1782.

Worshipful Brethren of the Right Worshipful

Lodge,

YOUR Request is my justification for you, and my only
Excuse to the World, for submitting this Day's Performance
to public Censure.

A. DUNBAR.

To the Right Worshipful Edmund Heard, Master,
and the other Officers and Members of
Trinity Lodge.

should include the performance. It is now too late—and the
 necessity of obliging has all things. The being of a
 will not to attain the confidence, and provide the
 for the being of a honest man.
 of the common practice of like occasions—of last
 in the common practice upon the wife, the
 are not intended into this profound mystery. I feel an in-
 ability to adopt a different manner. I am fully convinced
 that the much praise can hardly be bestowed upon (a) me-
 and manifestly a crime. But are not high commendations,
 embodied with all the excellence of speech, and in-
 upon the mind with all the powers of eloquence, a little in-
 consistent with that good and observed by every one me-
 ~~~~~

Right Worshipful MASTER,  
 Worshipful WARDENS, and  
 BRETHREN of this Most Ancient and Honorable LODGE,  
 dedicated to ST. JOHN.

THE Task, which at your command, I have under-  
 taken upon this occasion, compared to those abili-  
 ties that must execute it, even at my first engage-  
 ment appeared to be truly great, and has been  
 sensibly growing heavier to the present hour. I  
 feel the weight of it; and were it possible, at this moment  
 should

should elude the performance. But it is now too late—and the necessity of obligation bars all escape. This being the case, I will endeavour to assume the confidence, and procede with the fortitude becoming an honest man.

It is somewhat difficult, upon this *joyous solemnity*, to deviate from the common practice on the like occasions—of launching out into encomiums upon the wise, the marvellous institution of *masonry*. And yet, as I speak before many who are not initiated into this profound *mystery*, I feel an inclination to adopt a different mode. I am fully convinced that too much praise can hardly be bestowed upon so useful and masterly a craft. But are not high commendations, embellished with all the excellence of speech, and impressed upon the mind with all the powers of elocution, a little inconsistent with that *good rule*, observed by every *true mason*—of using no suasion with such as are extraneous to our happy fraternity? If so, then by such a tenor of discourse—in imitation of the laudative custom, I should at least attempt a transgression, though I might not be able to *succeed*. I know not how it is; but one thing I am sure of—that what is here said is not at all intended as a censure upon those who have gone before me, nor indeed does my heart entertain an unfavourable thought of them. In fact, I find myself already in some degree chargeable with the same measure; and that scheme of thought, which I now have in contemplation, if pursued with any manner of justice to my design, must exhibit the *royal art* in a most amiable point of light, and at least implicitly recommend it.



It is my intention, so far as my small acquaintance with the *craft* enables me, to illustrate and explain some of the important *mysteries* of *masonry*;—more especially two great and general maxims that are at the foundation of its *moral* precepts, *viz*—That *TRUTH* is no less the rule of action than of speech—and that *BENEVOLENCE* and *selfishness* are coincident. By so doing, I shall accommodate myself in the best manner possible to the audience at large, and so far, I doubt not, give satisfaction to every worthy brother. Any person acquainted with the nature of this *most ancient and honourable* institution must know, that the moral character of *masonry* is what every man may understand, and ought to practise. It is, moreover, no less an object of the *mason's* attention than that *occult* science, which never can be divulged to the unenlightened part of mankind. This accommodation therefore is certainly but a reasonable part of that civility which is due to our good friends and respectable neighbours, who have done us the honor at this time of assembling with us, and who are not accustomed to hear any thing from this sacred desk either unimportant or unintelligible to them.

It is justly characteristic of a wise man to *build* his house upon a rock;—that is to say—upon a foundation that will not fail him. And when we pass into *metaphor* and *allegory*, and consider happiness at large, as a *building* which every man is concerned in erecting for himself, wisdom, without doubt, requires no less care, than in literal *architecture*, that the basis be sure and immoveable. This basis can be no other than *truth*. Truth is the foundation, upon which

whoever builds as a skilful *mason* resteth his whole structure. He never acts a falsehood, nor makes a refuge of lies 'his confidence.

He that depends upon truth, depends upon something real ; but to trust in falsehood is to confide in a mere non-entity. GOD himself is truth and reality. *I AM* is the name which he has appropriated to his own supreme essence. On the other hand, the Devil is mere emptiness and a lie. He is declared to be a liar from the beginning, and the father of it.—A disposition agreeable to truth is rectitude, from whence happiness must invariably arise ; because it must always secure the objects of its pursuit, without a possibility of disappointment or occasion of repentance. This is to know and serve God, or the truth, which makes us free, and gives us eternal life. But a character dictated by false supposition is iniquity, and misery must inevitably be the consequence ; in as much as it can produce nothing better than shame and disappointment, vexation and loss. This is to adhere to and serve the Devil, or vanity and a lie, which brings us into bondage to sin and death. And this notion of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, so far as I understand the matter, is one of the great *mysteries* or general *maxims*, upon which the moral precepts of *masonry* are founded.

In the mathematical sciences we always procede upon truth and demonstration. *Geometry* is a most useful branch of the mathematics,—and the *masonic* art resteth upon the irrefragable maxims of *geometry*. While the builder adheres to these maxims of truth, no essential part of the *edifice* can possibly



possibly fail of its real intention. The *decorations*—the *ornamentative parts* are so much under the direction of fancy, as not perhaps always to be determined with *geometrical precision*. *De gustibus non est disputandum*;—every man judges for himself in matters of this kind.

So it is in common life. Every *good man and true* allows his fellow-creatures the right of private judgment; he embraces them with kindness, without all regard to those little peculiarities that are apt to kindle animosity and raise contentions in weak minds, and looks with indifference upon the harmless prejudices and frivolous superstitions of the multitude. For such peculiarities of opinion are all founded in ignorance, rather than in any moral perverseness of the human soul. Let people be acquainted with the truth, and the truth shall make them free: *Free—and accepted* one of another. For truth never disagrees: It is always consistent—always the same.

THAT which is *true*, and *fit*, and *salutary* in the nature of things is *natural religion*; which is embraced, at least partially, by all mankind. To make *this* religion manifest is the end of all *revelation*. This is the only religion which is at all worthy the notice of rational beings. For do but attend to the definition of it here given—and consider—what that religion can be good for, which is neither *true*, nor *fit*, nor *salutary* in the nature of things?—*Masons*, however, never consider this religion as opposed to any religion upon earth. All religions partake more or less of this; and in proportion

as they approach what is *true, fit and salutary*, they rise in merit and excellence. I hope therefore, I may be permitted, without the imputation of prejudice or partiality, to prefer to all others—that divine system of religious truth, with which kind heaven has favoured the world in the canonical scriptures. For whatever peculiarities it may seem to enjoin, the essence and substance of it is no other than that *universal* religion before described, which is *true*, and *fit*, and *salutary* in the nature of things: And *unalterably* so—while heaven and earth remain.

UPON this unalterable religion of *nature*, our *most ancient and honourable fraternity* is established. As this can never be invalidated, disannulled, or made void, so neither can the obligations that render this extensive society inassoluble, ever be abolished, or in the smallest degree violated, by such as walk in the *light of masonry*. They that occupy those mansions of *truth, unity and joy*, which the *royal craft* has furnished for social delight, may as well annihilate themselves, as by the least *oblique* direction to deviate from the *square* of integrity—in any imaginable *ratio* to diminish the *circle* of benevolence—or in the smallest instance designedly to fail of laying righteousness to the *line* and judgment to the *plummet*.

I do not say—that every pretending mason acts up to the perfection of our sacred institution, any more than every professing christian carefully imitates the example and conscientiously obeys the precepts of the great founder of Christianity. The delinquent, however of either denomination, is  
contending



contending against almighty *truth*, and exposing himself to what may be much worse, at least for a time, than total destruction. Such persons would do well to attend to that solemn commanding voice that once cried in the wilderness—the voice of the *holy Baptist* whose memory we this day wish to honour; and who, as a wise *Master-builder*, was zealously engaged in making the crooked *straight* and the rough *smooth*,—and thus with *polished stones*, after having brought down the mountains and raised the valleys to an horizontal level, paving the way, or the entrance of the Lord into his *universal temple*. This good man “preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

REPENTANCE is the altar of *Remission*, in the temple of *Reparation*, which was erected soon after the fall, by *Faith* and *Hope*, on the behalf of *Fear* and *Shame*, *Anxiety*, *Pain* and *Sorrow*, the children of *Error* and *Folly*, who had been educated in the school of *Ignorance* within the great wilderness of *Darkness*. This temple is situated near the borders of the wilderness, on that side which is stretched out towards the regions of *Light*. The altar is a *cube*; which every *mason* knows is a figure of six equal sides. Each side is *three feet square*. It is marvellously suspended, without any visible support, at the distance of *three feet* from the *pavement*. The top of the altar, therefore, is just the height of a man: *Which intimates that no mortal ought to think himself either above or below the humble exercises of repentance*. Four sides of this altar are in a *perpendicular*—and the other two in a *horizontal* position. The four perpendicular

pendicular sides face to the four cardinal points of the *compass*, and have each its particular inscription. On the East side is written ILLUMINATION—on the West, HUMILITY—on the North, RESOLUTION—and on the South, DEPENDENCE. It has NATURAL RELIGION imprinted on the bottom—and upon the top, REVELATION inscribed in capitals.

THE principal sacrifices that are made upon this altar are *Prejudice* and *Pride*, *Puffanimity* and *Rashness*. All, who have made these usual and necessary sacrifices, pass from the altar along the *Isle* of *Reformation* to the door on the east of this spacious *building*, looking towards the territories of *Light*. From hence, by the direction of the *Twilight*, they proceed in the straight and narrow path of *Perseverance* to the magnificent Theatre of SIMPLICITY, which stands within the limits of DAY.

THIS delightful and truly perfect piece of *architecture* is the most ancient monument of human ingenuity, that time has not totally demolished. It was erected by *Wisdom* and *Innocence* before the fall, and proves that *masonry* is coeval with creation. A particular description of this most pleasing structure would carry me much beyond the necessary limits of this day's performance. I can only observe—that here are constantly acted, not in *borrowed*, but *real* characters, all the graces and virtues that bless and adorn human nature. The exhibitions therefore upon this *Theatre* must excite *Rapture* in every beholder ; which passion, dividing itself into two kindred streams, flows perpetual in the channels of *Devotion*.



*votion* and *Philantropy*, refreshing the gardens of paradise, and reinstating mankind in that felicity for which the race was first created, and to which the *royal laws* of *masonry* are infallibly calculated to restore us.

THE other great *mystery*, which dictates the *moral* precepts of *masonry*, is the *Coincidence* of the selfish and benevolent principles that make up the character of humanity; from whence it comes to pass that doing good to others is the most effectual way of serving ourselves.

OUR appetites are here distinguished into benevolent and selfish, in conformity to the common mode of speaking, though perhaps this distinction may have been the cause of great confusion of ideas in men's minds, and of much opposition and uncharity in their misguided hearts.—It seems to be taken for granted by most of our moral speculatists, that pleasure and advantage can arise to ourselves, by the gratification of a *selfish* disposition only—and that the indulgence of our *benevolent* propensities must wholly terminate in the good of others. Whereas, did they at all consider the nature of our desires and inclinations, they would undoubtedly perceive—that the gratification of every appetite is a *personal* enjoyment, whether it be a private or social disposition. The gratifications of our benevolent propensities are as much our own as those of any other desires whatever, and are, on many accounts, the most pleasing of all indulgencies. And, surely, he who would be *wisely* selfish, must cultivate and indulge those desires that yield the greatest and most lasting pleasures. These, every

*true mason* must be sensible, are to be sought for in obedience to the *social, tender, friendly* propensities of great and liberal minds, bent upon general beneficence, engaged in mutual kindness, and melted down and cemented, by the love of their supreme and common parent, into a sympathetic union.

Our private concerns are the foundation of fear, jealousy, envy, and many such-like painful anxieties, which cannot fail of rendering a person burdensome even to himself, whenever they prevail over his benevolent affections. There is a pusillanimity or dastardliness of soul conspicuous in every person, whose good wishes are confined to his own fortune, which not only makes him contemptible in the judgment of others, but deprives him of the noblest enjoyment of himself, and throws him into a tremor even at the approach of a fellow-creature. But let a person state himself as a member of a faithful fraternity, for whose general welfare and prosperity his heart is warmly engaged, and all cowardly sensations flee away—his mind becomes calm, active and resolute, capable of every enterprise, and vigorous in the exercise of every talent, by which the world may be benefited, or the nature of man adorned. His affections and abilities in this case are laudably and naturally directed: And it is from such a generous fervor of spirit, and exertion of capacity, that the most refined enjoyments result.

I GRANT indeed—that there are some tempers so sordid and illiberal, as not to be capable, at all times, and in the highest degree, of the pleasing sensations of benevolence. But where



where is that heart of adamant, so insensible to the characteristic feelings of humanity, as not in many instances to recognize the generous sentiments of our nature, and confess the truth of that divine declaration—“*It is more blessed to give than to receive?*”

“*NONE of us,*” says an Apostle, “*liveth to himself.*” And considering selfishness, as understood in common speech, in opposition to benevolence, no one can live to himself, says Experience, without denying himself the most rapturous and permanent pleasures of a man, and refusing to taste the sweetest source of felicity. A person does not attain to his proper destination single and alone. He necessarily stands connected with his brethren; and by forming an union with a whole fraternity, he finds his safety, his honour and his pleasure in the friendly sympathy of their conspiring hearts.

“*Man, like the generous vine, supported lives;*

*The strength he gains, is from th’ embrace he gives.*”

Upon these principles it is, that every worthy mason is a man of integrity, benevolence and liberality. He does not reluctantly exercise his charity, either in reciprocal friendship, or for the relief of distress—as though what he bestowed upon others was lost upon himself; but knowing—that to be wise for himself, is to be social, generous and humane.

I do not entertain a doubt—but the sentiments I express are perfectly agreeable to the well instructed mind of every *brother* here present; though the manner in which they are delivered may not answer the expectations of any one. The whole has been as well adapted, as might be, to the capacity of every individual hearer. No doubt, however, it will justly be expected—that something be addressed to the assembly at large; and civility calls upon me, in the name of this *Right Worshipful Lodge*, to acknowledge with thanks the privilege of this house now indulged us.

A wise man indeed might wonder—and a good heart would feel pain—were the convenient and beneficent *art*, which has laid the foundations of *architecture*, and provided *mansions* for all, to be denied a *shelter*. But you, our friendly fellow citizens, have the satisfaction of very different sensations. May peace and happiness rest upon all such as have in themselves a foundation of enjoyment laid in the benevolence of their tempers.—The sentiments you may entertain of our fraternity are not indifferent to us. We regard them with pleasure or pain, as they appear to be just or unjust. We think we ought to stand secure from either contempt or envy; since no man can rationally envy us those privileges to which he may have *free access*, nor despise that *art* of which he is totally ignorant. If we do not conduct in all respects as *good men*, we fall so far short of the character of *true masons*;—we are convicted of ourselves, and are justly deserving of your censure. But if the fruits of our  
*occupation*



*occupation* recommend the mystery of our *profession*, and our *diligence* and *economy* support our *liberality*, *friendship* and *humanity*, must not a contempt of the *craft* argue a great degree of perverseness, and the despisers of it be found quarreling against that *benevolence* which alone can give peace and joy to the universe? Our fraternity has frequently met with hard usage, and may meet with the like again. But I hope we are prepared for whatever fortune may be allotted us. Triumphant in conscious integrity, and rejoicing in our mutual approbation of each other, it is our duty and our design to bear reproach with meekness and fortitude, *while we have bread to eat that the world knows not of, and is not able to take from us.* At the same time righteousness and love are sufficient to bless you all: And blessed be those whose hearts are friendly and upright. They will—they must indeed be happy.

THE tender Sex, though last addressed, are very far from being behind in our esteem. You, my fair hearers, among the concerns of life, will ever be the first and chief objects of our attention. A disposition to accommodate and gratify you is one of the strongest desires of our souls. We wish, were it possible, to satisfy that curiosity, which notwithstanding some are often smart enough to disown, we think you must necessarily entertain respecting the *royal craft*. But it is indeed a matter from which you must be persuaded to refrain. It is for your own sakes that you are under the prohibition. Your interest leads you to different studies.

Though

Though the art *masonic* is withheld from your knowledge, yet are you *Mistresses of arts* sufficient, if judiciously practised, to render yourselves peculiarly happy, by alluring the world into a happy devotion to your service and pleasure. And why should you be studious of this hidden science, rather than of those kindred arts and sciences which are open to your inspection, and which yet, as they do not come within the sphere of your amusement or usefulness, are as much a *mystery* as *masonry* itself? As the learned languages are, with very good reason, much neglected in your education, so there can be no very good reason assigned—why you should take pains to acquaint yourselves with that *universal language* by which *asons* converse. Be assured—that without being subjected to any part of the *study* or *labor*, you will ever reap a very great share of the *profits* of our occupation—in that *shelter* and *support*—that *assistance* and *relief*—that *consolation* and *tenderness*, which the laws of our fraternity, as well as our natural propensities, oblige us to yield you.

*Worshipful BRETHREN, and respectable FRIENDS,*

THE maxims of *truth* and the principles of *benevolence* must finally prevail and triumph over all opposition. For great is the *truth* and stronger than all things,—sweet is *benevolence*, the source of *felicity*, the highest excellence of *Deity*. The works of the Devil shall be completely destroyed. Vani-  
nity



nity and lies must come to an end. All the seeming evils and apparent blemishes and imperfections in the universe, which is the *building* of GOD, our *supreme Master*, and the sovereign, alwise, and benevolent *Architect*, shall in process of time appear to be necessary parts and real beauties of the stupendous and amazing *structure*. The mystery of GOD shall at length be finished, and *righteousness* alone shall be exalted.

WHAT transports of delight ! What sublime raptures of bliss—must *every* heart experience,—when vice and mortality shall be known no more,—when calamity shall be banished the creation,—when all tears shall be wiped from all eyes,—when all enmity shall be erased from all hearts,—when all the various *communities* and *combinations*, the *sexes* and *distinctions* of people, and nations, and languages, and manners, after being conformed to the *maxims of truth*, and inspired with the affections of *generosity* and *love*, shall be united, upon the immense THEATRE of SIMPLICITY before-mentioned, in one *General Assembly*, through which *Innocence* and *Joy* shall reign in *Harmony* forever !—What august and majestic scenes shall open to gratify our increasing curiosity,—when every *middle wall of partition* shall be broken down and removed, and we—no longer confined to distinct *apartments* in the great *circle* of creation, shall be at liberty to make the *grand tour* of *Immensify*—meet with none but *friends* ! What an employment will then be presented for eternity ! What enjoyments, for the rational and  
longing

longing mind, in all its boundless capacities of pleasure!—  
A prospect *this*—which, if any thing can, must irresistibly pre-  
vail upon us to conduct with the wisdom, the fortitude, the  
concord, and the dignity, becoming *Men* of REASON and  
*Brethren* of HUMANITY.



F I N I S

